



March 5, 2025

The Honorable Arthur Corvese, Chairman
House Committee on Labor
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H.5943, An Act Relating to Businesses and Professions – Holiday Business

Dear Chairman Corvese,

The undersigned members of the Rhode Island Business Coalition write in strong support of House bill 5943 which seeks to exempt retail employers with fewer than 15 employees from the requirement to pay time-and-a-half wages for employees working on Sundays and holidays. We thank Representative Casey for introducing this important legislation to help our state's small business community.

As you are aware, small businesses in Rhode Island, particularly those in the retail sector, face numerous challenges staying competitive, and managing overhead costs. For many small retailers, operating on Sundays and holidays is critical to serving customers, and competing with larger retailers in Rhode Island and businesses in nearby Massachusetts and Connecticut. However, the added financial burden of time-and-a-half pay on these days disproportionately impacts small businesses that already operate on tight margins.

Rhode Island appears to be the last state to require employers to pay their employees additional compensation for working on Sundays and holidays. This presents an undue hardship for our state's businesses, particularly those with fewer than 15 employees, which comprise the majority of Rhode Island small employers. Rhode Island is truly a small business state with more than 92 percent of the state's employers having less than 20 employees.

Smaller businesses are less likely to be able to absorb these additional costs. By removing the time-and-a-half pay requirement, H5943 offers an opportunity to level the playing field, allowing

The Rhode Island Business Coalition represents 50 industries and 6,280 businesses that employ 231,200 people throughout Rhode Island.

smaller employers to compete more effectively while still respecting the needs of their employees.

We believe this bill is an important step in supporting our state's small businesses and promoting job growth while ensuring that business owners can continue to serve their customers. We strongly urge support for the passage of H5943, which will provide much-needed relief to the state's small retail businesses.

Thank you for your consideration of the Coalition's position on this legislation.

Sincerely,

East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce

Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce

National Federation of Independent Business

North Kingstown Chamber of Commerce

Rhode Island Hospitality Association

Rhode Island Manufacturers Association

Rhode Island Marine Trade Association

Rhode Island Small Business Economic Summit Tax and Budget Committee

Rhode Island Staffing Association

cc. House Labor Committee members